

THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of selling display rights in a digital image, comprising:
receiving at least one digital image from each of a plurality of sellers;
5 transmitting a version of at least one digital image to a plurality of bidders;
offering for sale at least one category of available display rights representing a scope
of use of the digital image;

receiving a plurality of bids for said at least one category of display rights;
determining at least one buyer, based on said plurality of bids; and
10 transmitting the digital image to said at least one buyer.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein
said at least one category comprises an exclusive right to display the digital image;
and
said buyer is determined based on the highest bid received.

15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein
said at least one category comprises a non-exclusive right to display the digital image;
and
said at least one buyer is determined by calculating a maximum revenue from selling
to a one or more of the bidders at the bid price offered by the lowest of said at least one
20 buyer.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving from each seller
information which define the rights under which a seller may display the digital image.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of categories of available display
rights are offered, and the categories comprise at least one first category comprising an
25 exclusive display right and at least one second category comprising a non-exclusive display
right;

the method further comprising receiving at least one bid for each of said first and second categories; and

- comparing a winning bid for selling the display right on an exclusive basis with a total amount of revenue to be received by selling the display right on a non-exclusive basis at the
5 bid price offered by the lowest of the successful bids; and
determining said at least one buyer based on the outcome of the comparison.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the available display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image comprises a plurality of: exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media within a specific geographic location, exclusive rights to display
10 in printed or electronic media during one or more time periods; exclusive rights to display in printed media in predetermined number of publications; exclusive rights to display in media of a certain language; or combinations thereof.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the available display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image comprises a plurality of: non-exclusive rights to display in
15 printed or electronic media within a specific geographic location, non-exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media during one or more time periods; non-exclusive rights to display in printed media in a predetermined number of publications; non-exclusive rights to display in media of a certain language; or combinations thereof.

- 20 8. The method of claim 7 wherein the available display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image comprises both exclusive and non-exclusive rights, wherein at least some of the offered rights are conflicting rights, wherein there are one or more bids on at least one pair of conflicting rights, and wherein the buyer or buyers are determined by the electronic marketplace and are the bidder or bidders of non-conflicting rights that result in the
25 greatest revenue.

9. A method of selling display rights in a digital image, comprising:
receiving at least one digital image from each of a plurality of sellers;
transmitting a version of at least one digital image to a plurality of bidders;

offering for sale at least one category of non-exclusive display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image comprises;

transmitting a price of the non-exclusive right;

receiving a plurality of bids from buyers for said at least one category of display

5 rights;

changing the price by a preselected amount depending on the quantity sold within a preselected time interval; and

transmitting the digital image to buyer whose bids were accepted.

10 10. The method of claim 9 wherein

the price increases by a first preselected amount if a first preselected quantity of bids are accepted within a preselected time interval; and

the price decreases by a second preselected amount if a second preselected quantity of bids are not accepted within a preselected time interval, and stopping decreasing the price

15 when a preselected minimum price is displayed.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein the first preselected quantity does not equal the second preselected quantity, wherein the price does not change if the number of bids accepted is between the first preselected quantity and the second preselected quantity.

12. The method of claim 9 wherein the display rights offered for sale comprises a
20 plurality of: non-exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media within a specific geographic location, non-exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media during one or more time periods; non-exclusive rights to display in printed media in a predetermined number of publications; non-exclusive rights to display in media of a certain language; or combinations thereof.

25 13. A method of selling display rights in a digital image, comprising:
receiving at least one digital image from each of a plurality of sellers;
transmitting a version of at least one digital image to a plurality of bidders;

offering for sale at least one category of available display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image, wherein said at least one category comprises an exclusive right to display the digital image;

receiving a plurality of bids for said at least one category of display rights;

5 determining the buyer based on the highest bid received; and

transmitting the digital image to said at least one buyer.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the available display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image comprises a plurality of: exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media within a specific geographic location, exclusive rights to display
10 in printed or electronic media during one or more time periods; exclusive rights to display in printed media in predetermined number of publications; exclusive rights to display in media of a certain language; or combinations thereof.

15. A computer for selling rights in a digital image, said computer containing software and being adapted to:

15 receive a digital image from a plurality of sellers;

allow access by a plurality of potential bidders;

transmit a version of the digital image to the plurality of bidders and a message offering for sale a plurality of available display rights, each representing a scope of use of the digital image;

20 receive a plurality of bids for said at least one display right;

determine at least one buyer, based on said plurality of bids; and

transmit the digital image to said at least one buyer.

16. The computer of claim 15, wherein said plurality of available display rights comprises at least one non-exclusive right to display the digital image, said computer and
25 software being further adapted to:

accept a plurality of bids on the nonexclusive right;

determine the successful bidder or bidders by maximizing revenue obtained by selling to all bidders at the price offered by the lowest bidder.

17. The computer of claim 15, wherein said plurality of available display rights comprises at least one exclusive right to display the digital image and at least one non-exclusive right to display the digital image, said computer and software being further adapted to:

- 5 accept a plurality of bids on a nonexclusive right;
- accept a plurality of bids on an exclusive right;
- compare the revenue from each combination of non-conflicting bids; and
- identify at least one successful buyer or buyers of non-conflicting rights that provides maximum revenue from selling the non-exclusive rights at the bid price offered by the lowest
- 10 of said at least one successful buyer of non-exclusive rights and/or from selling to one or more buyers non-conflicting exclusive rights.

18. The computer of claim 15, wherein the available display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image comprises a plurality of:

- 15 exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media within a specific geographic location;
- exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media during one or more time periods;
- exclusive rights to display in printed media in predetermined number of publications;
- exclusive rights to display in media of a certain language; or
- 20 combinations thereof.

19. The computer of claim 15, wherein the available display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image comprises a plurality of:

- non-exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media within a specific geographic location;
- 25 non-exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media during one or more time periods;
- non-exclusive rights to display in printed media in a predetermined number of publications;
- non-exclusive rights to display in media of a certain language; or
- 30 combinations thereof.

20. A method of buying display rights in a digital image, comprising:
accessing, with a computer, an electronic marketplace via the internet:
receiving, on the computer, a display version of the digital image from the electronic marketplace;

- 5 receiving, on the computer, an offer for sale of at least one category of available display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image;
transmitting, from the computer and to the electronic marketplace, at least one bid for said at least one category of display rights;
obtaining at least one display right; and
10 receiving the digital image.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the available category of display rights representing a scope of use of the digital image comprises at least one of exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media of a specific geographic location, exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media during one or more time periods; exclusives right to
15 display in printed or electronic media in predetermined number of publications; or combinations thereof; and

at least one of non-exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media of a specific geographic location, non-exclusive rights to display in printed or electronic media during one or more time periods; non-exclusive rights to display in printed media in a
20 predetermined number of publications; or combinations thereof.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein there is a bidding period, further comprising transmitting a bid whose value will be determined at a future time based on a premium over the winning bid at the conclusion of the bidding period, wherein the rights and image are received prior to the end of the bidding period.